



# The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

## Writing Item and Scoring Sampler

# SUPPLEMENT

2009–2010  
Grade 5

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# WRITING

## ***INTRODUCTION***

The 2009–2010 Writing Item and Scoring Sampler Supplement displays released items from the 2009 PSSA operational test. This sampler supplement is to be used in conjunction with the previous year’s item sampler. The 2008–2009 Writing Item and Scoring Sampler can be found on the Pennsylvania Department of Education website at <http://www.pde.state.pa.us/>. Select the “Pre K–12 Schools” tab at the top of the page. Then select “Assessment” in the “Learn About” column to the left. Select “Resource Materials” in the “Learn About” column of the next page, and then scroll down to find the appropriate sampler. Alternately, you may type in or click this link to reach the location of the item samplers:  
[http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a\\_and\\_t/cwp/view.asp?a=108&Q=73314&a\\_and\\_tNav=680|&a\\_and\\_tNav=](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/cwp/view.asp?a=108&Q=73314&a_and_tNav=680|&a_and_tNav=)

This item and scoring sampler supplement contains 12 writing multiple-choice items and one writing prompt. The multiple-choice items are connected to embedded-error passages. Each item is preceded by the Assessment Anchor and Eligible Content coding. The correct answer is indicated by an asterisk. Each item is followed by a brief analysis or rationale. The table following each multiple-choice item displays the percentages of students who chose each answer option. The correct answer is also shaded in these tables. The table following the writing prompt indicates the students’ performance in composition and conventions control at each score point. Sample student responses for each of the scoring levels are also included for the writing prompt.

## WRITING

### ***DESCRIPTION OF NEW PLANNING PAGE***

The Grade 5, 2009–2010 Writing Item and Scoring Sampler contains a newly developed prompt planning page. Student-friendly language provides greater access to the PSSA writing prompt and assists 5th graders with planning a response essay. This new planning page will be phased in beginning with the 2010 test administration. Students may expect to see this change with some planning pages in the 2010 test booklet.

The following pages contain *examples* of the new planning page for each mode of writing.

## WRITING

### NARRATIVE WRITING PROMPT

You will have approximately 60 minutes to plan, write, and proofread your response to this writing prompt:

Page 4	SERIAL#
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**Write your response on pages 2 and 3.**

#### PLAN before you write

- Make sure you understand what the prompt is asking you to do.
- Think about your task and your audience.
- Think about the subject and the story you want to write.
- Organize your ideas on scratch paper. Use a graphic organizer, thought map, outline, or other prewriting tool to plan your story.

#### FOCUS while you write

- Stay with the same point of view.
- Use descriptive details in your story. Include dialogue, if appropriate.
- Use a variety of types of sentences.
- Write your story so it has a clear beginning, middle, and end.

#### PROOFREAD after you write

Proofreading checklist:

- ☐ I stayed with the same tone and point of view.
- ☐ I used descriptive details in my story.
- ☐ I corrected any errors in capitalization, spelling, sentences, punctuation, and word choice.

**Go on to the next page to begin writing your response.**



## WRITING

### INFORMATIONAL WRITING PROMPT

You will have approximately 60 minutes to plan, write, and proofread your response to this writing prompt:

Page 6	SERIAL#
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Write your response on pages 2 and 3.

#### PLAN before you write

- Make sure you understand what the prompt is asking you to do.
- Think about your task and your audience.
- Think about the topic and what you want to write about it.
- Organize your ideas on scratch paper. Use a graphic organizer, thought map, outline, or other prewriting tool to plan your essay.

#### FOCUS while you write


- Stay focused on the topic.
- Support your ideas with specific details and examples.
- Use a variety of types of sentences.
- Organize your paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion. Use transitions to connect your ideas.

#### PROOFREAD after you write

Proofreading checklist:

- ☐ I stayed focused on the topic.
- ☐ I used specific details to support my ideas.
- ☐ I corrected any errors in capitalization, spelling, sentences, punctuation, and word choice.

Go on to the next page to begin writing your response.

GO ON 

Status: Development Date: August 18, 2009  
Form Set: New OE Format Form: A

## WRITING

### PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPT

You will have approximately 60 minutes to plan, write, and proofread your response to this writing prompt:

Page 2	SERIAL#
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**Write your response on pages 2 and 3.**

#### PLAN before you write:

- Make sure you understand what the prompt is asking you to do.
- Think about your task and your audience.
- Think about the topic, your position on that topic, and what you want to write.
- Organize your ideas on scratch paper. Use a graphic organizer, thought map, outline, or other prewriting tool to plan your argument.

#### FOCUS while you write

- Take a clear position on the issue.
- Support your position with details, examples, and reasons.
- Use a variety of types of sentences.
- Organize your paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion. Use transitions to connect your ideas.

#### PROOFREAD after you write

Proofreading checklist:

- ☐ I stayed focused on the topic.
- ☐ I used reasons and examples to support my position.
- ☐ I corrected any errors in capitalization, spelling, sentences, punctuation, and word choice.

**Go on to the next page to begin writing your response.**

**GO ON** 

## WRITING

### Writing Passage 1 with Multiple-Choice Items

Read the passage below and then answer questions 1–4 on pages 2–4.

**1** Last weekend, my family and I visited a pretzel factory. **2** It was the first commercial pretzel factory in the United States. **3** A stone house that was built in 1784! **4** It is called the Sturgis Pretzel House. **5** It is located in Lititz, Pennsylvania. **6** In 1850, a man named Julius Sturgis began perfecting a recipe for the hard pretzel. **7** His crunchy pretzels were different from the soft pretzels other bakers made then. **8** Sturgis decides to open his own bakery in the stone house where he lived with his wife and fourteen children. **9** His family has been making pretzels there ever since. **10** The best part of the tour was making our own pretzels. **11** We learned to roll, stretch, and twist dough into a pretzel shape. **12** It was not as easy as it looked. **13** My pretzel looked a little like a lumpy rock. **14** Then we waited while our pretzels baked in the 200-year-old brick ovens. **15** Although my pretzel looked a little funny, it was the best one I had ever eaten!

#### B.6

1. Which sentence is incomplete?

- A sentence 2
- B sentence 3 \*
- C sentence 11
- D sentence 12

*Students are asked to identify an incomplete sentence. Options A, C, and D are relatively short but complete sentences. Option B is the correct answer because sentence 3 serves as a subject complement to “pretzel factory” in the previous sentence; the idea is carried forward, but the group of words itself cannot stand on its own as a sentence.*

A	B	C	D
6%	72%	4%	17%

**Note:** The percentages listed in the table below each item have been rounded.



## WRITING

### B.5

2. Choose the best way to combine sentences 4 and 5.

- A It is called the Sturgis Pretzel House while it is located in Lititz, Pennsylvania.
- B It is called the Sturgis Pretzel House where it is located in Lititz, Pennsylvania.
- C It is called the Sturgis Pretzel House, and it is located in Lititz, Pennsylvania. \*
- D It is called the Sturgis Pretzel House, so it is located in Lititz, Pennsylvania.

*Students are asked to choose a correctly structured sentence that uses a logical connector. Option C is the correct answer because a comma and the word “and” are the correct elements to combine the two sentences. Options A, B, and D suggest illogical (“while,” “where,” “so”) conjunctions.*

A	B	C	D
3%	10%	85%	2%

### B.6

3. Which change should be made to correct an error in verb tense?

- A visited should be visit in sentence 1
- B decides should be decided in sentence 8 \*
- C has should be had in sentence 9
- D learned should be learn in sentence 11

*Students are asked to recognize an incorrect shift in verb tense. Option B, sentence 8, is the correct answer because sentences 6–8 all take place in the past, yet the first verb (“decides”) in sentence 8 shifts to the present tense. Options A, C, and D suggest incorrect shifts in verb tenses.*

A	B	C	D
5%	79%	13%	3%

## WRITING

### B.5

4. Choose the best place to add this sentence.

A tour guide told us the history of the Sturgis Pretzel House.

- A before sentence 6 \*
- B before sentence 9
- C before sentence 11
- D before sentence 14

*Students are asked to place a new detail in the passage. Option A—before sentence 6—is the correct answer because sentences 6–9 explain the history of the Pretzel House, and the new detail serves as a topic sentence. Option B (sentence 9) is in the middle of the history, and Options C and D (sentences 11 and 14) are describing actions that occurred during the tour of the factory.*

A	B	C	D
64%	17%	12%	7%

## WRITING

### Writing Passage 2 with Multiple-Choice Items

Read the passage below and then answer questions 5–8 on pages 5–7.

**1** Last summer, my family went on a weekend trip to Lake Erie. **2** We packed our bags in the evening and left early the next morning. **3** When I asked my dad which direction we were going, he told me to look at the map. **4** I find my hometown of Pittsburgh and make a line with my finger to the lake. **5** We were driving North. **6** It took us a little over two, hours to get there.

**7** That afternoon, my mom and I went on a bird-watching hike. **8** Then I went fishing with my grandparents, and I made sandcastles with my sister on the beach. **9** The water in the lake was freezing even though it was summertime. **10** We went swimming anyway. **11** After we swam, we bundled up in blankets to get warm. **12** My parents started a bonfire on the beach, and we ate fried fish for dinner while the sun set over the water.

#### B.6

5. This passage is written in the past tense. Which sentence incorrectly shifts to the present tense?
- A sentence 2
  - B sentence 4 \*
  - C sentence 7
  - D sentence 9

*Students are asked to identify a shift from the past tense to the present tense. The verbs in Options A, C, and D are all in the past tense. Only the verbs in sentence 4 (“find,” “make”) shift to the present tense. Option B is the correct answer.*

A	B	C	D
17%	60%	13%	10%

## WRITING

### B.6

6. Which sentence has an error in capitalization?

- A sentence 1
- B sentence 3
- C sentence 5 \*
- D sentence 8

*This item provides four sentences with possible capitalization errors—including words that could be improperly capitalized or words that were lower case and maybe should be capitalized. The correct answer is Option C. “North” is incorrectly capitalized as it is simply referring to a direction.*

A	B	C	D
13%	11%	57%	18%

### B.6

7. Which sentence has a comma that is used incorrectly?

- A sentence 6 \*
- B sentence 8
- C sentence 11
- D sentence 12

*Students are asked to identify the misuse of a comma. Options B, C, and D show commas used correctly in compound and complex sentences. Option A inserts an unnecessary comma between the words “two” and “hours.” Option A is the correct answer.*

A	B	C	D
85%	5%	6%	3%

## WRITING

### B.5

8. Choose the best concluding sentence for this passage.

- A I hope I can learn how to build better sandcastles next year.
- B I like spending time with my grandfather when we go on family trips.
- C I would like to go to college when I grow up and study about the birds I saw on this trip.
- D I am so happy that my family went on this trip together, and I hope that we can go back next year. \*

*Students are asked to choose the best concluding sentence for the passage. Options A, B, and C include sentences that add new details or introduce a new topic but do not signal a conclusion. Option D is the best concluding sentence because it completes the action of the trip. The sentence refers back to the beginning of the passage about the family's weekend trip to Lake Erie.*

A	B	C	D
3%	5%	3%	89%

## WRITING

### Writing Passage 3 with Multiple-Choice Items

Read the passage below and then answer questions 9–12 on pages 8–10.

**1** Lying on my back and holding the metal railings of the park’s merry-go-round tightly, I look up at the blue sky. **2** The clouds and tree branches seem to spin out of control I whirl round and round. **3** I feel the bump of feet landing as my friend, Micky, stops pushing and jumps on to enjoy the rest of the ride. **4** “I’m so dizzy!” I cry. **5** How do people get dizzy? **6** It is really very simple. **7** Your ear has three loop-shaped tubes filled with liquid. **8** When you spin, the liquid sloshes around, like water in a glass. **9** Hair-like structures and nerves in your ear sense the movement of the liquid. **10** They send a message telling your brain that you are spinning. **11** When you stop spinning, the liquid keeps sloshing around for a while. **12** This sends two different messages to your brain, so your brain is confused. **13** Once the liquid stops moving, your brain gets the right message, and you don’t feel dizzy any more.

#### B.5

9. Choose the conjunction that best corrects sentence 2.

- A The clouds and tree branches seem to spin out of control that I whirl round and round.
- B The clouds and tree branches seem to spin out of control as I whirl round and round. \*
- C The clouds and tree branches seem to spin out of control before I whirl round and round.
- D The clouds and tree branches seem to spin out of control unless I whirl round and round.

*Students are asked to choose the most logical word to combine two sentences. The answer options are subordinating conjunctions, so students must use higher-level thinking skills to arrive at the correct answer. Option B (“as”) is the correct answer because it shows the two actions (clouds and tree branches spinning and the narrator whirling) are occurring at the same time.*

A	B	C	D
6%	87%	4%	3%

## WRITING

### B.6

10. To correct an error in subject-verb agreement, change

- A stops to stop in sentence 3.
- B get to gets in sentence 5.
- C sense to senses in sentence 9.
- D sends to send in sentence 10. \*

*Students are asked to recognize the agreement between a verb and its subject. Answer options are both singular and plural. Option D is the correct answer because “sends” has incorrect agreement with its subject, “They.”*

A	B	C	D
8%	3%	20%	69%

### B.5

11. Which change corrects an error in word choice?

- A Change Lying to Laying in sentence 1.
- B Change feet to feat in sentence 3.
- C Change very to vary in sentence 6.
- D Change write to right in sentence 13. \*

*Students are asked to study the context of words in the passage and choose the one that is used incorrectly. Option A offers two commonly confused verb forms, while the remaining options offer homonyms. The correct answer is D because in this context, the word “right” means “correct,” which is the meaning needed in the sentence.*

A	B	C	D
23%	4%	3%	70%

## WRITING

### B.5

12. Choose the best topic sentence for this passage.

- A Getting dizzy is all in your ears. \*
- B Getting dizzy is not that much fun.
- C I always get dizzy on the merry-go-round.
- D I wonder if you can get dizzy in outer space.

*Students are asked to choose the best topic sentence for the passage. Option A is the best topic sentence because it introduces the topic in a way that will elicit reader interest. The remaining sentences of the passage stay focused on dizziness and ears. Option B contradicts the opening sentences that describe a fun activity, Option C simply repeats information already in the passage, and Option D opens a new topic of discussion.*

A	B	C	D
55%	19%	22%	4%



## WRITING

### PSSA PERSUASIVE SCORING GUIDELINE

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4	FOCUS	Sharp, distinct controlling point presented as a position and made convincing through a clear, thoughtful, and substantiated argument with evident awareness of task and audience.
	CONTENT DEVELOPMENT	Substantial, relevant, and illustrative content that demonstrates a clear understanding of the purpose. Thoroughly elaborated argument that includes a clear position consistently supported with precise and relevant evidence. Rhetorical (persuasive) strategies are evident.
	ORGANIZATION	Effective organizational strategies and structures, such as logical order and transitions, to develop a position supported with a purposeful presentation of content.
	STYLE	Precise control of language, stylistic techniques, and sentence structures that creates a consistent and effective tone.
3	FOCUS	Clear controlling point presented as a position and made convincing through a credible and substantiated argument with general awareness of task and audience.
	CONTENT DEVELOPMENT	Adequate, specific and/or illustrative content that demonstrates an understanding of the purpose. Sufficiently elaborated argument that includes a clear position supported with some relevant evidence. Rhetorical (persuasive) strategies may be evident.
	ORGANIZATION	Organizational strategies and structures, such as logical order and transitions, to develop a position supported with sufficient presentation of content.
	STYLE	Appropriate control of language, stylistic techniques, and sentence structures that creates a consistent tone.
2	FOCUS	Vague evidence of a controlling point presented as a position that may lack a credible and/or substantiated argument with an inconsistent awareness of task and audience.
	CONTENT DEVELOPMENT	Inadequate, vague content that demonstrates a weak understanding of the purpose. Insufficiently elaborated argument that includes an underdeveloped position supported with little evidence.
	ORGANIZATION	Inconsistent organizational strategies and structures, such as logical order and transitions, to develop a position with inadequate presentation of content.
	STYLE	Limited control of language and sentence structures that creates interference with tone.
1	FOCUS	Little or no evidence of a controlling point presented as a position that lacks a credible and/or substantiated argument with minimal awareness of task and audience.
	CONTENT DEVELOPMENT	Minimal evidence of content that demonstrates a lack of understanding of the purpose. Unelaborated argument that includes an undeveloped position supported with minimal or no evidence.
	ORGANIZATION	Little or no evidence of organizational strategies and structures, such as logical order and transitions, to develop a position with insufficient presentation of content.
	STYLE	Minimal control of language and sentence structures that creates an inconsistent tone.

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## WRITING

### PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPT

You will have approximately 60 minutes to plan, write, and proofread your response to this writing prompt:

Your principal wants to make the physical education class periods shorter. Write an essay to your principal that convinces him or her why you agree or disagree with this idea.

Write your response on pages 13 and 14.

Assessed Skill	Score Point 4	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
Composition	7%	46%	43%	4%
Conventions	7%	49%	39%	5%

#### Plan

Before you write:

- Read the prompt carefully so you understand exactly what you are being asked to do.
- Consider topic, task, and audience.
- Think about what you want to write.
- Use scratch paper to organize your thoughts. Use strategies like mapping or outlining.

#### Write

As you write:

- Maintain a clear and consistent position or claim.
- Include specific details; use examples and reasons, and facts to support your position.
- Use a variety of well-constructed, complete sentences.
- Use a logical organization with an obvious introduction, body, and conclusion.

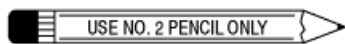
#### Proofread

After you write:

- ☐ Did you support your ideas with specific details?
- ☐ Do the point of view and tone remain consistent?
- ☐ Did you check for capitalization, spelling, sentence structure, punctuation, and usage errors?

Go on to the next page to begin writing your response.





My principal wants physical education (pe) shortend. I disagree to that, pe should stay the maximum time because if it did we wouldn't have enough time to even get a burn. We also need pe longer because we want enough time to make sure we're fit, non-bulgy and healthy. We also need time away from sitting down in a chair all day and need to stretch. Here are some other reasons why I think physical education shouldn't be shortend.

If all the children in the world didn't get to exercise there would probably be no toys. The teacher would have to get bigger chairs, desk, seats and more. That equals more money to be spent on more school supplies. Then you would have to keep on buying more and more supplies, because we'd keep getting bigger and bigger. See us children like to play video games and that requires a lot of sitting in front of a tv all day. When we watch tv and movies we like to eat popcorn so wouldn't we get more fat?

If you want us to stay healthy we going to need more time to get healthy. If we don't have an adiquite amount of time to do that we wont be healthy. I know what your saying you wont be that fat. These kids still need time to play get our muscles working. This brings us to another fact

Dont kids need fun I mean if you place in a cold damp, lifeless classroom all we going to learn is that stuff. If you interfear with our fun and for learnings we could

If you need additional space, please continue on the next page.



## WRITING



### PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPT (continued) FINAL COPY

probably not get a sport scolorship and some of us arent that good in school and will get a sport one, but if we don't have enough time to learn the sport, we wont probably make a scolorship. Then we wont go to college. Now do you want that to happen, so we ask you please don't cut our pysical education time please.

#### Composition Score 4

In this essay, the writer presents a sharp distinct controlling point as a position against having less physical education in school. He/she then goes on to make several points as to why shortening PE is a bad idea ("The teacher would have to get bigger chairs, desk, seats and more....because we'd keep getting bigger and bigger," "If we don't have an adiquite amount of time to [get healthy] we wont be healthy," and "If you interfear...we could probably not get a sport scolorship..."). The writer displays evident awareness of task and audience throughout the essay ("Then you would have to keep on buying...", "If you want us to stay healthy we going to need more time to get healthy").

The writer uses relevant details to support his/her position and persuasive strategies such as rhetorical questions ("When we watch tv and movies we like to eat popcorn so wouldn't we get more fat?" and "Now do you want that to happen,...").

There is an effective organizational strategy, through the use of logical ordering of ideas and the use of transitions ("also," "Here are some other reasons," "Then," "This brings us to another fact"). The essay is also nicely concluded with a final persuasive appeal in the concluding paragraph ("...we ask you please don't cut our pysical education time please"). The writer demonstrates precise control of language and uses varied sentence structures to create a consistent and effective tone

This essay exemplifies strong and consistent control of composition skills in the persuasive mode.

**AFTER YOU HAVE CHECKED YOUR WORK, CLOSE THIS WRITING BOOKLET SO YOUR TEACHER WILL KNOW YOU ARE FINISHED.**





Dear Mr. Principal,

Less PE is not a good Idea! I bet you lots and lots of kids will be bothering you to change it back to its normal time (yes, that includes me). Makeing PE shorter is a bad idea because we will have less time to exercise, less time for sports, and we wont learn as much about health as we need to learn. Take my advice, and dont shorten PE!

Exerciseing is a regular thing you should do 30 minets a day, for 3-5 days, but if you lessen PE's time, there wont be time to exercise. Becides recess; PE is the only time you get to exercise. You also get unhealthy if you dont exercise, so thats a problem. It also gets you up out of your normal routeen. If you still want to shorten PE, heres another reasen for you.

Almost every kid loves sports, but withought all the time we need in PE, we wont have time for sports. We wont have time to learn about sports, like where, say, soccer was first used, or, well, played. We have less time to play them, so we will probubly just end, up talking about them. Worse of all, we will have less understanding in sports, and that will afect our playing. Still not seeing my point? Maybe this will win you over.

Everyone wants to be healthy, am I right? Yes, I am, and without PE, we wont get to learn

If you need additional space, please continue on the next page.



## WRITING



### PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPT (continued) FINAL COPY

about health. Less exercise is bad for your health, you know, With out PE's regular time, we wont have as much fun, that will make us sad, and that will afect our 'health. I think I've made my point, right?

So you see! Without normal PE time, our school would be turned upside down! Please, please, please take my advice!

Sincerely,  
A student who  
loves PE very much :)

AFTER YOU HAVE CHECKED YOUR WORK, CLOSE THIS WRITING BOOKLET SO YOUR TEACHER WILL KNOW YOU ARE FINISHED.



## WRITING

### Composition Score 4

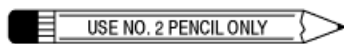
In this essay, a sharp distinct controlling point is presented as a position against having less physical education in school with the first sentence in the introduction (“Less PE is not a good Idea!”). The writer then introduces three reasons physical education should not be shortened: “...we will have less time to exercise, less time for sports, and we wont learn as much about health as we need to learn.” The writer displays evident awareness of task and audience throughout the essay (“If you still want to shorten PE, heres another reasen for you” and “Still not seeing my point?”).

The writer uses specific, relevant content to substantiate the argument (“Exerciseing is a reagular thing you should do 30 minets a day, for 3–5 days,...”). The writer also uses persuasive strategies such as the rhetorical question, “Everyone wants to be healthy, am I right?”

The organizational strategy is effective through the use of logical ordering of ideas with the use of transitional words, phrases, and sentences such as, “If you still want to shorten PE, heres another reasen for you.” The ideas are clustered together (exercise, sports, learning about health), and there is a final persuasive appeal in the concluding paragraph.

The writer demonstrates precise control of language and uses varied sentence structures, including compound and complex sentences, to create a consistent and effective tone (“You also get unhealthy if you dont exercise, so thats a problem”).

This essay exemplifies strong and consistent control of composition skills in the persuasive mode.



If my principal were to make the physical education class shorter, I would disagree with him. There are three main reasons why I think so. One, because kids won't get as much exercise. Two, because it will keep making them think of a test they may have. Three, because kids won't enjoy coming to school as much. So please principal please don't make the physical education class shorter.

First off, kids won't get as much exercise having a shorter physical education class. When they have a longer class, they will stay fit. As you know staying fit is very awesome. Also, some kids need to lose weight. Having a longer physical education class is definitely better. That is one reason why I think physical education class should not be shortened.

My second reason is if they have a test and they are really nervous for it, they can forget about it! As you know forgetting about a test makes you feel so much better.

Thirdly, kids will enjoy school much more. Most people like gym because

If you need additional space, please continue on the next page.





## WRITING



### PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPT (continued) FINAL COPY

you get to play sports alot of the times you are there. Kids think it is +the best having more fun time in eqym. It is also more sports ta play in school.

Now that I have told you three reasons why I think the gym period should not be shordened can you tell me if you disagree or agree!

AFTER YOU HAVE CHECKED YOUR WORK, CLOSE THIS WRITING BOOKLET SO YOUR TEACHER WILL KNOW YOU ARE FINISHED.



## WRITING

### Composition Score 3

In the introduction of this essay, the writer clearly expresses disagreement with the reduction of physical education time and states his/her reasons (“because kids won’t get as much exercise,” “it will keep making them think of a test they may have,” and “because kids won’t enjoy coming to school as much”). The writer demonstrates general awareness of task and audience by referring to the principal rather than directly addressing him/her (“If my principal were to make the physical education class shorter, I would disagree with him”).

The elaboration of ideas is somewhat uneven. The first reason is more fully elaborated than reasons two and three, but those reasons still contain enough information to support the writer’s argument. The amount of elaboration used is deemed adequate. There is a rhetorical question, a type of persuasive technique, used in the conclusion, “Now that I have told you three reasons why I think the gym period should not be shortened can you tell me if you disagree or agree!”

The writer uses a functional organizational strategy with transitions (“First off,” “My second reason,” and “Thirdly”), creating a logical presentation of ideas. The conclusion restates the writer’s position and makes a persuasive appeal using the rhetorical question stated above.

Sentence variety and appropriate, but general, vocabulary are evident, creating an effective, persuasive tone.

This essay exemplifies adequate control of composition skills in the persuasive mode.



I disagree with the idea of making Physical Education classes shorter. Here are some reasons school is so long, there will be no fun in the day, and boring classes. If anything should become shorter it should be the regular classes. Phys. Ed is the best part of the whole day and we only have it every other day.

School is all day. there is no fun in the day except for Phys Ed. If you shorten it everyone will hate to get up in the morning. We will all be bored all day and then go to Phys Ed for a shorter time and then be bored again. Consider my words thank you.

If you need additional space, please continue on the next page.



## WRITING

### Composition Score 2

In the first sentence the writer states his/her disagreement with making physical education classes shorter; however, due to the lack of details, there is only vague awareness of a controlling point or substantiated argument. There also is vague awareness of task and audience; the writer addresses the principal directly only twice (“If you shorten it,” and “Consider my words thank you”).

The inadequate content development diminishes the effectiveness of the persuasive element needed to make an effective argument. The content is a list of reasons without elaboration (“School is all day” and “there is no fun in the day except for Phys Ed”). More specific reasons and additional development for the reasons given are needed for this essay to reach the adequate level.

There is limited evidence of pre-planning for this essay. The content is listed in random order, lacking elaboration. The one-sentence introduction, “I disagree with the idea of making Physical Education classes shorter” and the conclusion, “Consider my words thank you” are inadequate.

The use of simple vocabulary and simple sentence structures demonstrates inadequate control, creating a flat tone and limited style.

This essay exemplifies limited control of composition skills in the persuasive mode.

## WRITING



### PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPT FINAL COPY

You should not shorten gym  
because. It keeps students healthy.  
It also gives them exercise. Some  
students may not be able to  
exercise at home. Students also  
like going to gym.

#### Composition Score 1

This essay contains little evidence of a controlling point other than the statement that gym should not be shortened. The writer displays a lack of understanding of the purpose with the use of minimal and undeveloped content. Due to the minimal content, there is little to organize. The introduction is vague ("You should not shorten gym because"), and there is no conclusion to the essay.

This essay exemplifies little or no control of composition skills in the persuasive mode.

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## WRITING

### PSSA CONVENTIONS SCORING GUIDELINE

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4

- | Thorough control of sentence formation.
  - | Few errors, if any, are present in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation, but the errors that are present do not interfere with meaning.
- 

3

- | Adequate control of sentence formation.
  - | Some errors may be present in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation, but few, if any, of the errors that are present may interfere with meaning.
- 

2

- | Limited and/or inconsistent control of sentence formation. Some sentences may be awkward or fragmented.
  - | Many errors may be present in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation, and some of those errors may interfere with meaning.
- 

1

- | Minimal control of sentence formation. Many sentences are awkward and fragmented.
  - | Many errors may be present in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation, and many of those errors may interfere with meaning.
-

## WRITING



### PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPT FINAL COPY

Physical education, what can I say about physical education. Well, I can tell you that physical education needs to be a longer period of time, during our regular school day's. Physical education needs to be a longer class period, not shorter, because children need exercise, children need energy, and so children can move around!

My first reason, why physical education shouldn't be a shorter class period, is because children need exercise! Children need this longer time of exercise, because, they need to keep the inside and outside of their body's healthy, and strong. Also, getting exercise in gym, leads to getting energy in your classroom.

So, as I said before, gym leads to energy too. When children go to physical education, they get energy for other class periods, that are after the physical education period. Also, kids will be happy and excited for their next class after gym. They will not be lazy and tired. You know what I'm talking about?

My last reason, why gym should not be a shorter period, is because children get tired of sitting in their seats all day. I think, every kid, in my class, can agree with me that we need to move around more! In physical education, kids

If you need additional space, please continue on the next page.



## WRITING



### PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPT (continued) FINAL COPY

should get enough time either, playing games, running around, or exercising. With longer gym time, children will not have to stay in a seat all day.

Therefore, I'm hoping you, my principal, will change your mind about making physical education period shorter. And, remember children need exercise, children need energy, and children need to move around more during school!

#### Conventions Score 4

The writer of this essay demonstrates thorough control of sentence formation. Several complex sentences are attempted and constructed correctly. One such sentence (with the exception of an incorrect comma) is, "When children go to physical education, they get energy for other class periods, that are after the physical education period." The last sentence of the essay demonstrates correct parallel structure, "And, remember children need exercise, children need energy, and children need to move around more during school!" The writer also demonstrates sound command of grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation. Only one word is spelled incorrectly ("should int"). Some commas are used incorrectly, and there are apostrophes used incorrectly for some plural words ("during our regular school day's" and "need to keep the inside and outside of their body's healthy"). Overall, relative to the significant amount demonstrated correctly in this essay, the errors are minor and do not interfere with meaning.

This essay demonstrates strong and consistent control of conventions for writing.

**AFTER YOU HAVE CHECKED YOUR WORK, CLOSE THIS WRITING BOOKLET SO YOUR TEACHER WILL KNOW YOU ARE FINISHED.**





## WRITING



### PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPT FINAL COPY

#### Taking Away Physical Education

My principal wants to make are physical education class shorter but I disagree. I disagree with her because if she makes it shorter then we will not have enough time to play, exercise, and have fun. If we wouldn't have fun then there is no point of going. The less time we have to play that's bad do you agree? Then maybe she will at least let us to go outside.

Exersising is important to me and most kids so if she takes that away that's not to good. Most people should get out and exercise an hour a day. So with physical education class we get out are hour a day exercise is important to the body because it makes it stronger the stronger the body the better. Exercise also gets you better flexibility. So do we need Exercise?

Sports are fun but at times they are hard, and then we can get better and learn more. A lot of people play sports and they are a lot of fun. There are also a lot of sports, rugby, baseball, basketball, wrestling, soccer, football, cricket,

If you need additional space, please continue on the next page.



## WRITING



### PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPT (continued) FINAL COPY

bachy ball, hockey, and paint ball. I  
play alot of these sports because I  
love to be athletic. That is why I  
disagree with my princilpal.

#### Conventions Score 3

This writer demonstrates adequate control of sentence formation. Several complex sentences are structured correctly in this essay. ("I disagree with her because if she makes it shorter then we will not have enough time to play, execise, and have fun.") There are run-on sentences in this essay ("The less time we have to play that's bad do you agree?" and "So with physical education class we get out are hour a day exercise is important to the body because it makes it stronger the stronger the body the better"). There are also some missing commas, and the word "execise" is misspelled. Two other usage errors are present ("are" for "our", and "to" for "too"). The errors that are present do not interfere with meaning.

This essay exemplifies adequate control of conventions for writing.

**AFTER YOU HAVE CHECKED YOUR WORK, CLOSE THIS WRITING  
BOOKLET SO YOUR TEACHER WILL KNOW YOU ARE FINISHED.**



## WRITING



### PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPT FINAL COPY

I Dear Principal I disagree with this idea. Kids need gym classes. They need to stay fit so they need all the gym as possible. Or The kids would Not look and be healthy. You need to keep time the same. You would not like to Unhealthy kids would you?

#### Conventions Score 2

This writer's inability to consistently construct sentences interferes with meaning. A sentence fragment is present ("Or The kids would Not look and be healthy"). The writer omits a word after "to" in the last sentence, which is confusing. The third sentence is awkward ("They need to stay fit so they need all the gym as possible"). There is some random and unnecessary capitalization ("The," "Not"). The writer has made numerous errors in this short essay, and some of the errors interfere with meaning.

This essay exemplifies limited control of conventions for writing.

If you need additional space, please continue on the next page.



## WRITING



### PERSUASIVE WRITING PROMPT FINAL COPY

I think much snster class I think yes lest  
flast the ALL mch ones ALL nihs ones will se a Lat  
this school.

#### Conventions Score 1

This essay demonstrates minimal control of conventions for writing. There is only one sentence in this essay, and it is incorrect. Some words are misspelled, such as "shster" for "shorter" and "Lest" for "Let's." Other misspelled words, for example, "flast" and "nihs" make it very difficult to understand the writer's meaning.

This essay exemplifies little or no control of conventions for writing.

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## WRITING

### ***SUMMATIVE DATA TABLE***

**Note:** The percentages for student data have been rounded.

#### **Multiple-Choice Items**

<b>Sampler Sequence</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>1</b>	6%	72%	4%	17%
<b>2</b>	3%	10%	85%	2%
<b>3</b>	5%	79%	13%	3%
<b>4</b>	64%	17%	12%	7%
<b>5</b>	17%	60%	13%	10%
<b>6</b>	13%	11%	57%	18%
<b>7</b>	85%	5%	6%	3%
<b>8</b>	3%	5%	3%	89%
<b>9</b>	6%	87%	4%	3%
<b>10</b>	8%	3%	20%	69%
<b>11</b>	23%	4%	3%	70%
<b>12</b>	55%	19%	22%	4%

#### **Writing Prompt**

<b>Assessed Skill</b>	<b>Score Point 4</b>	<b>Score Point 3</b>	<b>Score Point 2</b>	<b>Score Point 1</b>
<b>Composition</b>	7%	46%	43%	4%
<b>Conventions</b>	7%	49%	39%	5%

**Writing**  
**Grade 5**  
**Item and Scoring Sampler Supplement**

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